Mercurius Politicus:

A PRIVATE

CONFERENCE

BETWEEN

Scot & Needham,

Concerning the preſent AFFAIRS

OF THE

NATION.

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A PRIVATE CONFERENCE BETWEEN *SCOT* and *NEEDHAM*, Concerning the preſent Affairs.

Pol. YEs faith, 'tis very true; here ſtands Peelgarlick, a man indeed, but no *Politicus* now: There's four pound a week gone, beſides *Advertiſement Half-crownes*, and all this onely for *Lying* and *Slandering*; two ſins, which if they are as petty and as little to be regadded as I made 'um, were the moſt inconſiderable ſins in the whole world.

Scot Sins, do ye call 'um, Mr. *Needham*? they are no ſins, but onely theſe fellowes have a minde to be picking of quarrels.

Pol. Troth, I did believe ſo; for what is Sin? Sin, (and I think we are indifferent competent Judges thereof, for we have writ at Church long enough to be inſtructed) I ſay, ſin taken as it ſhould be, that is to ſay, Metaphyſically, and Hyperbolically, is a what do

ye call it, a — *Chimæra?* or in the honeſt, that is, in the Factious Heretical Pulpit-phraſe, and *Night-cap* Language of our Times, *A Sterryiſm*, or a meer *Empty Notion.*

Scot. Troth, *Marchamont*, thou art in the right on't; and but that I know thee ſo well, I ſhould take thee to be a Jeſuite by thy arguing.

Pol. Now if Sin be an empty Notion, then 'tis a *Vacuum:* grant me but that, Maſter *Scot*, and my buſineſs is done.

Scot. Grant thee that, *Marchamont*! I, with all my heart.

Needham. Why then I thus argue: What ever is a *Vacuum*, cannot be in nature: But Sin is a *Vacuum*, and therefore it cannot be in nature.

Scot. My great Grandfather never *proverb'd* ſo true as thou ſpeakeſt.

Needham. This being ſo evident, where's your Conſcience, Mr. *Scot?*

Scot. I, where indeed, Mr. *Needham?* 'Tis a Queſtion, that I wonder you, of all men in the world, ſhould ask me, who know ſo well that as a man I never had any, and as a Stateſman, it was dangerous for me to have any.

Needham. I mean where's the uſe, where's the neceſſity of Conſcience, that ſhould make us liable to blame for not having any?

Scot. I'th Devils Arſe in Darbyſhire, for ought I know: if it be'nt there, 'tis no where, or elſe I would it were no where. Hang Conſcience, I hate to hear on't. 'Tis nothing but a *Clog*; ſo that a man with a conſcience lookes like a dog with a piece of wood at's tayl,

tayl, to keep him from leaping over Ditches.

Needham. It ſhackles a mans will like a *Horſe-lock.*

Scot. Nay, it torments the noſe of a mans will, like a ring in the ſnout of a hog.

Needham. It pinches the foot of humane Appetite, like a narrow Shooe. 'Tis the ingrateful ſerpent that the Countrey man kept in his warm boſom to hiſs againſt its Foſterer.

Scot. Conſcience preſumes to be a kinde of *Juſtice of Peace* too (I wonder by what Authority) and if a man have not a great care, he will ſet all his deſires in the Stocks. Hang it again, I ſay.

Needham. Damn it, I ſay.

Scot. Burn it.

Needham. Sink it.

Scot. Be it the Bleſſing of the Turks.

Needham. And an Abomination to the Coſſacks.

Scot. But oh! the *want* of *Conſcience*, the *contempt* of *Conſcience*, how it battens the purſe, how it fattens the guts, and cauſeth the face of a man to gliſter! Let a man want and contemn Conſcience, and how chearfully he quaffs the Tears of Orphans, and feaſts upon the Miſeries of the oppreſſed Widow. How it comforts him to ſee his wife *Peacock* it in the bravery of the ſpoiled Egyptians! It makes a man frolick, ſo that you ſhall ſee him daunce *Syncopas* over the Carcaſe of an Enemy ſacrificed to his Revenge. I tell thee, Maſter *Needham*, this want of Conſcience has more vertue than ever the Poets attributed to *Ale* or *Sack.* Why, let a man be a Kings Tryer, nay, let him ſit and judge the innocent to an undeſerved death, alas! there will be none of your pious *Reckings.* If he go

to ruine a Nation, there will be none of your religious *Trickups*, I found this by Experience. *Experto crede Thomaſo*, Mr. *Needham*.

Needham. Alas, Sir, I have try'd it a hundred times, and finde your Experiences to be as true as Goſpel, nay much more true. Goſpel! that's a thing for your Chriſtians to believe in, I wonder how I came to think on't, ſure 'twas a *Lapſus linguæ* that made me hit upon it. Tell me where there is ſuch a Proverb among all *Solomons*, *Nothing venture, nothing have*, to inſtruct a young beginner as I was, when I firſt came to be a *Quibling Britannicus*? when I had nothing to truſt to but the formal Thred-bare Pluſh, and two or three *Recipe's*? Then did I finde that the Men of *Weſtminſter* had the money: quoth I, them will I ſerve; for 'tis money I want: then did I write, yea I wrote againſt the King himſelf, and like a brave State-Scavenger, made it my endeavor to lay all the iniquities of my party at his own door. And I found the Trade ſo ſweet, that I was reſolved to continue it, and did ſo, you know, venturing ſometimes hanging, ſometimes damning for my ſubſiſtance.

Scot. That's the leaſt thing of ten thouſand: thou knoweſt thy Superiors did it, I did it my ſelf, yet I am none of the valianteſt. 'Tis the ſillieſt thing in the world for a man of Wiſdom, a Ruler of the Nation, to be awed by ſuch a pitiful thing as a *Soul*: why 'tis ſuch an inſenſible, contemptible Atome, that ten thouſand of 'um will ſtand upon the point of a Needle; ao great *venture* indeed, to venture the *damning* of a *mote* in the Sun.

Needham. There be another ſort of men that talk

to

to us of Heaven, and fain would have us to believe, that our corporeal Substances can be capable of spiritual joyes: It may be so, but by God I'le ne're believe it while I breathe.

Scot. Nor I neither; as if a man could not be a Sarazen, unless he have such a Head as hangs without *Newgate.*

Needham. These foolish Divines have more crotchets in their brains than a Fidler.

Scot. Hang 'um, they are not worth a Scotch *Beatle*, Pitiful fellows! a Night-cap, a pale Face, a Handkerchief, and a *Musculus common places*, sets up one of those grave *Instructors.* 'Tis true, that thus accoutred they begin to preach; and they say they are sent with Messages from God (though they are no more sent upon Gods Errands, than the great Turk:) However, if Gods Messages and our Interest disagree, they dare as well eat fire as deliver 'um. Do you think, Master *Needham*, that I have not laugh'd in my sleeve, to finde my self with so much diligence listening to, and scribling out a Fellows Sermon, as if it had been the Examination of a *Plotter*, when perhaps a little before I told him what he should say; For then your Godly Cheat was in fashion.

Needham. 'Twas an excellent neat one, and my thought easie to learn: for if a man could be but private and conformable, his business was done. I am sorry it begins to be so well known. Pox of that Protector, he wore it almost thredbare.

Scot. Then there's the *Bible*, another thing which they talk much of, and that tells us of Commandments, forsooth.

Needham.

Needham. It may tell us of Commandments, but I believe it will be long enough before you or I keep um. For my part I know no Commandments worth obſerving, unleſs they were yours or Sir *Arthur Heſilriggs.*

Scot. Prethee what think'ſt of that Commandment that ſays, *Thou ſhalt not kill?* I cannot conceive how it concerns us.

Needham. No more, than it concerns us to know whether *Preſter Iohns* wife have a Mole upon her noſe, or no. 'Tis true, it is there ſaid, *Thou ſhalt not kill*, yet it is not ſaid, *Thou ſhalt not kill thy King*: it is not ſaid, *Thou ſhalt not kill a Caveleer.* No, no, the meaning thereof is more particular; that is to ſay, *Thou ſhalt not kill thy own father*, or *thy own mother*, unleſs upon a very *urgent neceſsity.* Thou ſhalt not kill *thy ſelf*, for that's Felony, and he that does it, is a fool and an aſs, and may well be thought to be weary of his life. Alas! ſhould the words dilate it ſelf to Generals, why Butchers and Poulterers would be included in this Commandment, and we ſhould want fleſh meat, and be forced to feed upon Graſs, like *Nebuchadnezzar.*

Scot. 'Tis very true; for there is as great a difference between *Killing* and *Murthering*, as between *Hanging* and *Choaking.* Now all men know, *hanging* is nothing, *choaking* is all; ſo *killing* is nothing, *murthering* is all. Killing is nothing but binding a man to the peace; but now when people cannot be content to kill a man, that is, to binde him *civilly* to the peace, but they muſt quarter him, and *haſh* out his limbs, as if they were to be ſtewed with Claret wine

and

and Oysters, that's murthering a man: a cruelty beyond my Practice or Advice. For 'tis enough that when a mans safe he's safe: Thus we took the King and cut off his Head; but when by so doing, we had bound him to the peace, we restored him to his friends, and bid um sow on his Head again while he was warm: Why, if they could not sow on his head right, it was the Surgeons fault, not ours. But *Montrose*, he was murthered; for they were not content onely to binde him to the peace, that is to say, to cut off his head, but they took it away from his friends, and set it a cooling upon the top of a high house: Now when the natural heat was gone out of it, it was then impossible ever to recover him, though they had sowed it on never so well.

Needham. Well! of all things in the world I wonder why *Poysoning* was so little esteemed among ye. The Italians have got the trick on't — by God — 'tis an excellent way, if a man have but the knack. A my soul, had ye but poysoned two or three men, ye had carried your business as clear as the Sun.

Scot. Not that I was ever against it in my life, Master *Needham*, but I think the devil was in um; they thought to have carried all things by force, and would by no means hear of Policy.

Needham. ——Nay, and had such good and faithful Instruments too, as you had? ——I could name others, —— but there was my self for one, and a *prime one* too, though I say't that should not; and I have a little skill in Phylick too, I thank God, enough, to know the times and seasons of giving, and the symptomes of well working: And for the latter part of the

Game, the beſt in the world to howl over the Hearſe of the deceaſed Patriot, and make whining Elegies.

Scot. 'Twas a very great overſight without all queſtion: for my part I cannot excuſe um, and therefore I will not go about it But to leave this diſcourſe of Killing, though it be the Mother of many a good and politick Maxime, let us skimme over the reſt of the Commandements which theſe pitiful fellows would impoſe upon us.

Needham. The next is, *Thou ſhalt not commit Adultery.*

Scot. That's not in my Bible I am ſure, and therefore 'tis an abominable lye.

Needham. Yes, I believe 'tis in your Bible, Sir; but it is not a pin matter, for that's but one book, and one book enforces a Command, no more then one Swallow makes a Summer.

And whereas they tell us further, That a man muſt not love his Neighbors wife, 'tis a meer Fobb: For we are bid to love our Neighbor as our ſelf. Marry g'ap then with your *Whim-whams*, Maſter Divines; Goodman Coxcombs; is not my Neighbors wife my Neighbor, as well as her Husband? Then are we bound, I think, to love our Neighbors wives too as well as our ſelves, that is, better than our own wives; for they that love other mens wives, care not a ruſh for their own.

Scot. Moſt certain Truths! Surely *Needham*, thou didſt feed upon nothing, when thou wert a childe, but *Solomons* in Gingibred, to become thus wiſe. But there is another ſmall Venial Sin, which they have a peek againſt, and I wonder they can't let that alone.

Needham.

Needham. What's that, Sir, Sodomy?

Scot. No, no, a thing as harmleſs as that, *Fornication.*

Needham. That's ſo far from being ſo much as a *Peccadillio*, that it is neceſſary for a Stateſman: *Rome* had been ſwallowed up in the Conſpiracy of *Cataline*, had not *Cethegus* lov'd a Wench. All your great Politicians ever lov'd Wenches: *Cecill* lov'd a Wench, and your Emperors of *Rome* lov'd Wenches. And when I wrote *Pragmaticus*, I remember I uſed to talk of you too for loving Wenches.

Scot. Why truly I do love a Wench, and that Wench hath brought me a thing after my own likeneſs: but don't ſpeak on't, Mr. *Needham*, for I would not have it known; yet I tell it you, to ſhew you that I am a Politician, and a great man.

Needham. Troth, let who will know it, 'tis not a pin matter: why ſuppoſe a man ſhould ſee Mr. *Scot* go into a Bawdy-houſe, and ſuppoſe a man ſhould ſee him come out again, and ſuppoſe a man ſhould tax Mr. *Scot* for it; and ſuppoſe Mr. *Scot* ſhould anſwer, I have been, 'tis true, in a Bawdy-houſe, but I went, being a man of reaſon and of knowledge, to *convert a ſinful woman*; I wonder what that man could ſay for himſelf. A company of fools, that know no more what belongs to *Chriſtian* Liberty than a Trapſtick. But did you never get a *Clap*, Mr. *Scot*? for it is neceſſary that a Politician ſhould be a Gentleman. Three *Claps* will ſave a man the price of a new *Coat of Arms*.

Scot. Why then Ile tell ye, I have had three *Claps*, and an After-clap worſe than that, —— you may gueſs what I mean, —— they cur'd me with *Turbith Mine-*

lis, and Mutton dry roasted, by the same token I remember they kickt me out of doors afterwards, where I was a Suitor to a young Lady, because a Gentleman told her friends that my wife dyed of that disease.

Needham. Was that true?

Scot. Troth I am afraid on't.

Needham. Tis enough: and give me leave to tell ye, had you been a thousand Brewers Clerks, you are now as good a Gentleman as *William the Conqueror*. Now as for *Lying*, *Slandering*, *Coyning false Intelligence*, and *Abusing the People*, what a plague would they have that prate against 'um? For if a man may lye and slander another for the preservation of his own Honour, which is a thing you must take for granted, much more may a man lye for the preservation of his Rulers and Superiours: And is it not better that the People should be abus'd, than that my *Masters* Interest should suffer? I would fain know what Advantage it is for a company of Plough-men and Shop-keepers, or suppose they be Countrey Gentlemen, that read *Diurnals* over their Ale, when they come from Hunting, to know the Truth of things? Let them but read the Story of a Plot, a Battel, and an Ordinance of Parliament, and it suffices. Besides, the People are bid to be deceiv'd; for, saith the Text, *If the People will be deceived, let them be deceived.* Adde to all this, That if I should not deceive them, some body else will, and why should I let go my Place, and my Profit, onely to give another the opportunity of being as great a Knave as my self?

But what think you of these times? I am sure,

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Maſter *Scot*, if the People be not deceived, and that quickly too, we ſhall be deceived our ſelves.

Scot. Troth, Maſter *Needham*, the ſtream runs very ſtrong againſt us: 'tis a hard matter to do any thing. *Lambert*'s in one place, *Vane* in another, and for Sir *Arthur*, hee's ſuch a Hair-brain'd fellow, that he is not fit to be conſulted withal; and here am I alone with a thouſand Spies upon mee. Yet I have one bone left, for all that, to throw in amongſt them, and I think there may be ſome miſchief in it too.

Needham. Throw 't among 'um however, Maſter *Scot*, if the Granado be right, 'twill fire ſomewhere I warrant ye.

Scot. Why look you here it is: a Letter from *Bruſſels*, read it, and tell me your opinion.

Needham. Moſt excellent, by Heaven; if theſe Lyes take, (and they are neat ones, though they be but Lyes) why then will theſe Lyes breed Fears and Jealouſies moſt abundantly, as a Cowes Hide breeds Waſps: and may they breed more then there were Locuſts in *Egypt*: Then will theſe Fears and Jealouſies breed ſuch curious Diſſentions, and theſe Diſſentions beget ſuch brave Flames and Combuſtions, that my heart will be delighted to ſee the Blaze. Well, I long to behold this Pedigree of Deſtruction.

Scot. But if the people have ſo little wit as to chuſe us Parliament-men; and the Parliament don't throw us out again with their Committee of Priviledges, wee'l make work I warrant ye. I tell you,

Sir,

Sir, we muſt not care a Fart for the Good, or Settlement of the Nation, we muſt minde our own buſineſs.

Needham. If ye don't, ye are fools; Damn the People; I know their Settlement will be your perpetual Deſtruction.

Scot. Nay, for ought I know, if the Times fix, I ſhall be a worſe man than I was at the beginning, and ſo for the good of the Nation looſe the reward of ſixteen years Villany.

Needham. I confeſs I did get Money, but it is moſt of it rubb'd away in Bowling-Alleys; ſo that if Confuſion do not happen quickly, I ſhall want a Recruit.

Scot. Why, you loſt your Place baſely, I never knew thee ſo conſtant before.

Needham. Conſtant! a plague on't; I never was conſtant in my life, and do you think I would have been ſo conſtant to you, if I could have told how to have help'd it. You would have me to have more Honeſty than your ſelf, Maſter *Scot*: No Sir, I am not ſo unmannerly to go before my Betters. I knew theſe People had a peek againſt me, yet I kept in with them too as long as I could, and began to fawn, and cringe, and beg pardon, but all would not do, you ſee they turn'd me out at length: A pox of Fortune; if a man were a Prophet, hee'd never do ſome things; Had I not writ the *HUE AND CRY*, the *Latine Inſcription* in the *Exchange*, (of which to my grief I liv'd to relate the blotting out) and Commented upon General *Moncks* Letter ſo

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contemptibly, I might have been in ſtill: And give me leave to tell ye, Maſter *Scot*, had I been ſtill in, I would not have cared a Fart for you, nor all your Faction.

Scot. Well, well, 'tis is vain to ſpeak any more of what is paſt. Go and get this Letter printed; if it hit, thou ſhalt write again, if not, we muſt e'ne *buoy* our ſelves up as well as we can. And ſo God buy, till anon.

Needham. If it don't hit, then e'ne farewel *Mercurius Politicus.*

The Rump.

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